Bunny Darling;

The end of another day. This one was not bad because I did manage to get into town to see the Symphony, I suppose I should have said to hear instead of to see but, as I shall explain later in this letter, it was the seeing, as much as the hearing, from which I derived pleasure. The very bad thing about today is that it brought no mail to me, and that is always bad. I’m anxious as the devil for my mail to start coming through in good order.

They have finally saddled me with some work to do. It is all landscape work and is rather tough but I guess I will survive. I am told that some of the landscapes I will do from life instead of having to make them up. I’ll be glad of this because it’s tough having to do landscapes merely from someone else’s description of them. Also, it means a trip for me out to the place where I’ll draw the landscapes from life. This is OK with me because it means I’ll be able to see a little of the countryside and get in some of my own sketching.

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I did a few sketches of some Filipino kids at the show the other night. They came out fairly well although I had to do them at a distance. The Filipinos are excluded from the GI’s seating area at the show and have to sit out at the sides. This makes it hard to get close up sketches.

We now have a drummer in the barracks. I hope he keeps his drumming as subdued as he has so far because I’d hate to have him pounding out jive full blast in here. Bad for the nerves don’t you know.

Our food has been wonderful. We’ve had fried eggs two days in a row, two of them too, and have also had chicken two days in a row. Last night fried chicken and tonight chicken fricassee. It has been very good too. I’m not used to this good food but still it will help me get used to the very good meals which you are going to cook for me when I get back. You are brushing up on your cooking aren’t you Honey? I’m sure you are because you told me that when I got back you’d be a first class cook.

There are a couple of young GIs here that I’ve been needing – they are about 19 years old and are just here for

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a few days. One of them was stating that the army could not make him do a thing that he didn’t want to do. He was sure that he could fix them up so they’d not do anything like that to him. This ancient theme could not fail to interest me because, if there’s a man whom the army can’t make do what it wants, that man must want to do anything. I have learned that the easiest way is to just drift along and let come what may. It isn’t for always and is quite immaterial to me what I do while in the army. Of course my present job is nice because I am doing something I like to do, and that’s all right too. I have found that with the old Maurice back I manage to escape the rapids and land in gentle waters. I have been lucky when I stop to think of Bob Kennedy and a lot of the other boys who ended up in the infantry in combat. I do not pine to add to my total number of points with Purple Hearts. Maybe they are pretty things but I
do not intend to wear ribbons or anything else when I get back. I just want to get out of uniform and into “civies” [sic] again.

About the symphony, it was given by the Manila Symphony Orchestra conducted by Prof. Herbert Zipper (as in TALON). It puts on a program each

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week, free to GIs. It must be about a fifty piece orchestra. There is only one thing wrong with it to my way of thinking, not enough brass and too much string. With all the soft string music I had all I could do to stay awake. Prof. Zipper was a very thin man who tried very hard to look like the average persons idea of a conductor. He had the long hair that kept falling in his eyes as he leaped around the stage, it was in the Stokowski manner the hair I mean. He had a disconcerting habit of conducting with his whole body, surging up with one beat and scrunching down with the next. Since his coat fit him quite loosely, he gave the appearance of an emaciated turtle popping in and out of it’s shell. Pursuing a particularly powerful passage he would go up in the air about a foot leaving me to marvel at how any man could accomplish this without taking his feet off the ground. He was quite a remarkable fellow. One of his eccentricities was conducting without a score to follow because of this he would sometimes drop a shade behind the orchestra in his surges and would have a hell of a time catching up. Of course I should give him the benefit of the doubt and suppose that he was

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in time and that it was his clothes which were lagging.

There was quite a story behind the orchestra. It was playing before the Jap occupation and during the occupation the disbanded and hid all their instruments. Many of them because guerrillas and quite a few were killed. When the Americans returned, they lost no time in getting together again, taking their instruments out of hiding, finding replacements for the orchestra, and putting on shows. They draw a capacity crowd too. A lot of the members now are quite young and there are several GI’s playing with it. It is quite a good orchestra and there were two very good soloists.

The theater was quite a thing. It was a fairly modern one cooled by a large central fan which blew a draft of air my way every once in a while. The seats were all wooden but were quite comfortable. It was very nice wood too, mahogany I believe. I got quite a boot out of the John in the theater. As I mentioned before, the theater was in the heart of Chinatown. On the walls of the john were all these Chinese inscriptions which I imagine must have

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corresponded to that great American literature – public toilet poetry. I think I am right in this assumption because the sketches which accompanied the Chinese ideographs were the old familiar ones that are found back home. It just struck me funny to think that this form of art, which I had imagines to be exclusively American, has its’ counterpart in all countries where there are public toilets. I remember reading a while back where some American anthologist was gathering all these poems and making an anthology of them as a hobby. It should be interesting, but I imagine that, if it were ever published, it would be a very limited edition, and naturally, would be banned in Boston.
We came back on the 14 Commands bus which is nothing more or less than a 2 ½ ton truck with a canvas top. I was surprised that there were no more on it than there were. I got a seat with no trouble at all. Some of the Filipino workers who go into town also ride back on the bus. The other night the bus failed to show up and the old telephone wires were really burning up

with requests for transportation.

Some fellows were selling ice cream around the bus stop for the modest price of 75¢ for a scoop (5c size scoop). Some of the more elaborate ice cream wagons have facilities for making banana splits consisting some sliced bananas and a few stale peanuts. The scoop of ice cream is places on a dish and surrounded by about five slices of banana (cross section) this is then topped off with a half dozen peanuts – and all for only $1.50.

I’ll have to leave you now Honey cause I can hardly keep my eyes open. Goodnight now Sweetheart. Remember that I love you more than anything in the world and that I shall

Always

Freddie